What is claimed is:

Claims

1. A method for a base site to provide a dispatch scan service to a communication unit in a CDMA communication system, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting, by the base site, a channel assignment for a dispatch call via a paging resource;

encoding, by the base site, dispatch communication for the dispatch call using a first CDMA long-code mask;

receiving, by the base site, a request for a CDMA long-code mask transition for the dispatch call;

transmitting, by the base site, a second CDMA long-code mask for the dispatch call in response to the request; and

encoding, by the base site, dispatch communication for the dispatch call using the second CDMA long-code mask after transmitting the second CDMA long-code mask.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the dispatch call is a group dispatch call.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of transmitting the channel assignment further comprises the step of repeatedly transmitting the channel assignment for the duration of the dispatch call.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the second CDMA long-code mask is transmitted to a communication unit from which the request was received.

5. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of verifying that the communication unit is authorized to join the dispatch call before transmitting the second CDMA long-code mask.

6. The method of claim 4 wherein the second CDMA long-code mask is transmitted via a traffic channel of the dispatch call, thereby transmitting the second CDMA long-code mask to participants of the dispatch call in addition to the communication unit from which the request was received.

7. The method of claim 4 wherein the second CDMA long-code mask is transmitted via an access channel.

8. A method for a communication unit to obtain dispatch scan service from a base site in a CDMA communication system, the method comprising the steps of:

scanning, by the communication unit, a paging resource for a channel assignment for a dispatch call;

transmitting, by the communication unit, a request for a CDMA long-code mask transition for the dispatch call;

receiving, by the communication unit, a CDMA long-code mask for the dispatch call; and

decoding, by the communication unit, dispatch communication using the CDMA long-code mask for the dispatch call.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the dispatch call is a group dispatch call.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein dispatch communication for the dispatch call is encoded using an initial CDMA long-code mask at least before the step of transmitting the request for a CDMA long-code mask transition.

11. The method of claim 8 wherein the request for a CDMA long-code mask transition is transmitted via a traffic channel of the dispatch call.

12. The method of claim 8 wherein the request for a CDMA long-code mask transition is transmitted via an access channel.

13. The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of completing a call in-progress before transmitting the request for a CDMA long-code mask transition.

14. A base site comprising:

a transmitter capable of transmitting a channel assignment for a dispatch call via a paging resource and of transmitting a second CDMA long-code mask for the dispatch call in response to a request for a CDMA long-code mask transition for the dispatch call;

a receiver capable of receiving the request; and

a processor capable of instructing the transmitter to transmit the channel assignment, of encoding dispatch communication for the dispatch call using a first CDMA long-code mask, of instructing the transmitter to transmit the second CDMA long-code mask, and of encoding dispatch communication for the dispatch call using the second CDMA long-code mask after the transmitter transmits the second CDMA long-code mask.

15. The base site of claim 14 wherein the processor is capable of instructing the transmitter to transmit the channel assignment repeatedly for the duration of the dispatch call.

16. A communication unit comprising:

a receiver capable of scanning a paging resource for a channel assignment for a dispatch call and of receiving a CDMA long-code mask for the dispatch call;

a transmitter capable of transmitting a request for a CDMA long-code mask transition for the dispatch call;

a processor capable of instructing the transmitter to transmit the request and of decoding dispatch communication using the CDMA long-code mask for the dispatch call.